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ABSTRACT

In this paper an attempt is made to present a comprehensive picture of the effects of separation and divorce on children. After information on trends in divorce is presented to indicate how many families and children are involved, three comprehensive reviews of one-parent families are discussed. Because some detrimental effects are associated with father absence, literature focused on family relationships and conditions of family life is reviewed to locate possible explanations for these effects. Topics explored include reasons for father absence, family conflict, parent/child relationships, financial resources of parents, and social supports. Factors accounting for the discrepancy between ability and school performance among children from one-parent families are suggested in a brief review of selected, recent studies. In conclusion, research needs in several areas related to children in one-parent families are pointed out. (Author/RH)

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TRENDS IN DIVORCE AND EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

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Introduction

This paper will attempt to present a comprehensive picture of the effects of separation and divorce on children. Aspects of family life and of experience in the community with support systems and schools will be analyzed. This work will rely heavily on several excellent reviews of the evidence spanning the last ten years, plus some more current studies.

As a context for the discussion, information on trends in divorce will be presented to indicate how many families and children are involved. After the available information on effects on children is discussed, some kinds of needed research will be suggested.

Trends in Divorce

Recent years have witnessed a dramatic increase in divorce in this country. In the period 1960-1978 the divorce rate went from 9 per 1000 married women to an estimated all-time high level of 22 per 1000. In 1978 there were 4.5 million children under 18 living with a divorced parent compared to 1.3 million in 1960 (Glick, 1979).

During the period 1960-78 the percentage of children under 18 living with two parents has declined from 88 to 78 percent. And those living with both natural parents have declined from 79% to 68%. The difference between these figures indicates that about ten percent of all children in each period lived with only one natural parent and a stepparent. By 1978 almost one in five children lived with only one parent, up from 9% in 1960. The proportion living with the father only rose from 1.1% to 1.6% compared to a rise from

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7.9% to 17.0% living with the mother only (Glick, 1981). Thus while more fathers were obtaining custody of their children as a proportion of all single parents they dropped from 12% to 9%.

Where a generation ago the largest proportion of single parents were widowed, today the larger percentage by far are divorced or separated. Since 1960 the proportion of all childrnn living with a widowed mother or father has remained constant but those living with a divorced or separated parent have increased several fold.

The 1960-78 acceleration in one parent families was greatest in the first half of the 1970's and since then the rate of increase has tapered off. Various demographic factors may be behind this trend, such as the present very low birth rate, the stabilization of the educational level of the young adult population, and a slackening of the increase of women in the labor force (Glick, 1981). Glick (1979) estimates that by 1990 if present trends continue 32% of all children will live for some time with a divorced parent.

Studies of One-parent Families

Over the past decade there have been a number of reviews of research bearing on the effects of divorce on children. Some of the more comprehensive and insightful reviews have included studies on all kinds of one-parent families. This has been necessary in large part because up until recent years most studies did not distinguish the causes of one-parent families. During the 1960's the earlier, being widowed was more common relative to divorce, and most studies sought simply to determine the effects of growing up in a household without a father.

Three comprehensive reviews of such households have been selected for discussion. The first was done about 10 years ago, the second about five years ago and the third is still in draft form.

The first review of studies conducted up to about 1970 is by Herzog and Sudia (1973). They cite almost 60 studies in tabular form comparing similar father-present and father-absent children only eleven of which included girls due to the focus of attention in earlier years. All involved continuing or temporary father absence rather than reconstituted stepparent families.

Three topics were treated in some detail: juvenile delinquency, school achievement and masculine identity. Herzog and Sudia (1973) concluded that the evidence in each area was not clear enough to demonstrate whether or not fatherless boys were overrepresented among those with the problems, except that for school achievement a finding of "no difference" seemed supported. They go on to offer several conclusions that did apply to the three problem areas:

> that the effects of father absence are neither as uniform nor as consistently handicapping as was widely assumed
>
> that the impact of father absence is conditioned and mediated by "a complex of interacting variables" including those present before the father's absence and the family functioning of present members. Family functioning, they note, is determined not just by the characteristics of individuals and the interaction of family members but also by the environment and conditions within which the family exists.

Regarding the child's intellectual and psycho-social functioning, Herzog and Sudia (1973) concluded that absence caused by death is less detrimental than that caused by the voluntary separation of parents. A number of studies they cited report no adverse effects associated with the death of a father. They list a number of reasons which may account for more adverse effects among the fatherless children such as the friction and family disorganization that may precede and even continue after separation, the weaker paternal role model when the father leavesout of conflict, the greater economic insecurity following separation and divorce, the social stigma attached to voluntary sepa ration, and the child's resentment against a deserting father (Herzog and Sudia, 1973). We will return to explore these issues in a later section.

The second review focuses on father absence and children's cognitive development. Shinn's 1978 article summarizes in table form 54 studies on cognitive performance and four on differences between quantitative and verbal skills.through 1976. It like the previous review calls attention to methodological problems such as the frequent failure to distinguish reasons for absence and its duration, and the use of specialized populations (e.g. families in therapy or counseling centers) in some studies. Shinn highlights studies of nonclinical populations which have comparison groups of father-present children and which controlled for socio-economic status (SES) in some way.

In summarizing her results, Shinn (1978) notes:

> "Of the 28 studies that met the criteria of methodological adequacy, 16 showed detrimental effects of father absence, 9 found no significant effects, and 3 found positive or mixed positive andnegative effects. The cognitive differences between children from intact and fatherless families were of some consequence. They ranged up to 1.6 years in achievement, .9 standard deviation units in IQ and aptitude, and .8 of the difference between a B and a C in grade point average. However, the effects were frequently not so large as those due to SES"

Shinn interprets these findings as evidence of the detrimental effects of ffather absence, unlike Herzog and Sudia's conclusion of no sufficient evidence of a difference. However, it is important to recognize that 23 of the 54 studies on children's cognitive performance tabled by Shinn were published in the 1970's after the earlier review.

Shinn proceeds to examine different types of absence, but notes that few research reports have identified different causes or durations of father absence. Of the four studies that compared reasons for absence, divorce was among the most damaging reasons in all four. Children with a father surrogate or stepfather scored between father present and father absent children on achievement and IQ tests in three studies. Shinn concludes that father absence is not a unitary variable, and that future research should consider the cause, onset, duration and degree of father absence and access to father surrogates.

Shinn (1978) asked whether father absence affects all cognitive skills equally. She commented that some researchers have hypothesized that children in fatherless homes acquire a "feminine pattern" of relatively low quantitative and high verbal aptitude scores. Only two of the four studies had adequate SES controls, and they were done on students from elite colleges so findings are inconclusive. However, twelve of the set of 54 studies on cognitive performance showed lower quantitative scores in children from fatherless homes and only one found improvement. For verbal skills, the findings were quite mixed.

The final review is also on cognitive performance and achievement among children in one-parent households. It was commissioned by the National Institute of Education, carried out by Hetherington, Featherman and Camara (1981), and is now in pre-final draft form. Like the Shinn review, it also depends on a count of relevant studies, and eliminates ones which do not meet standards of methodological adequacy. But in drawing conclusions, it employs a more stringent standard, a sign test (Siegel, 1956) which tells whether the preponderance of studies favor any one finding often enough to reach a given level of statistical significance. This is one form of what has been called meta-analysis.

Hetherington, Featherman and Camara (1981) present tabular information on 58 studies of parental absence, related to children's IQ and academic achievement as measured by standardized tests. Only five were published after 1976, so there were few added since the Shinn review. Additional meta-analyses of smaller numbers of studies relate one-parent family status to standardized tests of aptitude and ability, quantitative-verbal cognitive patterns, other cognitive skills, academic achievement as measured by teacher evaluations, school behavior and work patterns.

Regarding IQ this review concludes that the differences found in studies are usually small and reduced further when SES is taken into account. On aptitude and standardized achievement tests, differences were also usually

small (less than one year), but these studies lacked adequate control for SES or ethnic background of students. Most also did not furnish information on other factors that might be related to test performance such as time of onset, reasons for and length of parental separation, or the nature of family relations after separation.

Turning to other child outcomes studied, Hetherington, Featherman and Camara (1981) found no substantial evidence that quantitative-verbal differences varied between children from one and two parent families as did Shinn, nor that verbal scores on aptitude tests were larger or smaller than quantitative scores. It does appear that boys from one parent families score lower on quantitative aptitude tests than boys from two parent families, and that girls from one parent families score higher on verbal aptitude tests. But on achievement tests both boys and girls in one-parent families score lower on verbal and quantitative tests than do similar children in two parent families. The addition of more recent studies may help explain why this review found lower verbal scores whereas Shinn could not discern a pattern.

Another interesting pattern emerges when teacher evaluations are considered. Eliminating studies without adequate control for background variables, there is still evidence from the accumulation of studies that students from one parent homes receive lower grades and teacher-rated achievement. The studies were done among low-income families, but there is a suggestion of similar findings among middle income families. In addition, the studies summarized report more absenteeism, truancy and tardiness among children from one parent families, and describe them as being more disruptive, aggressive, immature and less self-controlled than children from two-parent households. As the authors observe, absence from class may limit learning time as well as create disruptions for teachers and signify to them a lack of motivation and interest on the part of students and parents (Hetherington, Featherman and Camara, 1981).

Such a state may in turn affect the teacher's evaluation of students and create expectations for performance which become translated into more or less assistance to students. In short, "Teachers' reports of depressed achievement among children from one-parent households may be based on their reactions to disruptive classroom behaviors and classroom work styles that do not conform to school expectations rather than on the actual academic performance of these children" (Hetherington, Featherman, and Camara, 1981). Study habits may be debilitating for students too. The few available studies on children's classroom work behavior suggest more difficulty in concentrating and attending to tasks, completing tasks on time and working independently.

This review concludes that despite their lower grades children reared in one-parent homes are unlikely to be experiencing any serious intellectual deficit.

Explanations of Effects

Since both of the more recent reviews have shown some detrimental effects of father absence, some explanations for the effects should be sought. The relationship between parents and their children is one arena for investigation including the reaons for the father's absence, the role of family conflict, parent-child relations, resources for parents and social supports. Each will be discussed. Since the Hetherington, Featherman and Camara (1981) review showed more effects on school performance than standardized tests, another arena is the school and classroom. It too will be considered in the next sections.

Family Relationships

Reasons for father absence. As noted previously, in Shinn's (1978) review divorce was among the most damaging cuases in all studies which compared reasons for absence. Hetherington, Featherman and Camara (1981), examining five partially overlapping studies, judge that children of divorced parents may be scoring lower on achievement and IQ tests. But they cite Santrock's (1972)

data which show a different pattern of normal or better progress depending on the age of the child at the time of separation, and the reason for it. Santrock compares children ages 6-13 on achievement and IQ tests and finds conflicting results.

Citing evidence from clinical studies, Longfellow (1979) reports more aggressive and antisocial behavior among children of divorce and more anxiety, moodiness and neurotic symptoms among children of widows. Studies of non-clinical samples also demonstrate the same pattern, Longfellow observes in an excellent shorter review of research on the impact of divorce on children.

In studying father absence among lower and middle class white adolescent girls, Hetherington (1972) found daughters of divorce more flirtatious than those of widows or intact families, whereas the daughters of widows were shy, withdrawn and very nervous when interviewed by a male. Zill (1978) also found that parent and teacher ratings of children with voluntarily separated parents were higher on aggressive behavior than those whose mothers were widowed or never married. Such studies indicate that father absence cannot be treated as a single variable in terms of its effects on children.

Family Conflict

Closely tied to the reason for father absence is the question of conflict between spouses. This area of investigation dates from Nye's (1957) comparison of high school students from happily married, conflict-ridden and divorced families. He found no difference in reported school adjustment or church attendance between children from one-parent homes and those from unhappy and conflict-ridden two-parent homes. But children from single parent families reported fewer psychosomatic symptoms and less delinquent behavior than those from unhappy two parent homes. The findings held up at all socio-economic levels.

More recent studies described by Longfellow (1979) and by Hetherington in another excellent review on children and divorce (1979) make the same point: that conflict is more important than number of resident parents in producing antisocial behavior, psychiatric symptoms and other adjustment problems. But whether separation reduces conflict and its effects is not clear. Wallerstein and Kelly in a longitudinal study of 60 middle class families who had divorced found that conflict prior to the divorce was not related to post divorce adjustment among normal preschool children. But if conflict between parents continued after the divorce, children were harmed.

Escaping from conflict may be a very beneficial aspect of separation and divorce. But other recent evidence indicates that conflict increases in the year after divorce (Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1979; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). At this time, children in divorced families especially boys exhibit more problems than do children in conflict-ridden two parent families. Hetherington (1979) observes that most parents take several years after divorce to put to rest ambivalent feelings and conflicts, and that some parents, more often women, keep a sense of outrage and anger. Some, however, are able to separate their marital and parental roles and do not draw their children into their own conflicts. If so, parent-child relations and the child's adjustment were found by Kelly (1978) not to suffer.

Parent-child Relations

Rutter (1971) presents evidence that poor parent-child relations in intact families is associated with child behavior problems and that the probability is increased dramatically when poor parent-child relations are coupled with a poor marriage. And in their long-term study of coping with divorce, Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) estimated that two-thirds of the mother-child relationships deteriorated during the year after divorce. This meant less cooperation, more anger, less trust and more disorder and tension in daily living. A number of

the children developed more serious psychological problems than before. However, young children especially preschoolers were given special attention whereas those eight and older often felt that mothers had been almost entirely withdrawn. Girls were also treated with more consideration than boys (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980).

Hetherington (1979) presents a further description of divorced mothers and their children drawn largely from her own and Wallerstein and Kelly's work. With time the custodial parent becomes increasingly important in the child's development. Her own well being and the quality of mother-child relations thus affect the child greatly. However, the child's behavior can also influence the mother's sense of competence, self-esteem and happiness. Divorced adults have more health and emotional problems even after the initial crisis period than married adults have. So on top of stress must be added the possibility of physical and psychological incapacities.

During the first year after divorce many others become depressed, self involved, erratic, less supportive and "ineffectually authoritarian" in handling their children (Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1978). Mothers and sons are especially likely to get involved in escalating coercion. By the second year, parenting improves markedly. Mothers in one parent families also use "restrictive power assertive disciplinary methods" and negative sanctions more (Hetherington, 1979). Poor control and infantilizing young children may be more common in middle than lower SES one-parent households.

Household routine, authoritative control, nurturance and maturity demands are important for the adjustment of preschool children. Parents turn to older children and adolescents more for emotional support and assistance with household functioning. If her demands for emotional support are not excessive, greater communication of concerns and plans can lead to more companionship between divorced mothers and their children. The greater participation of young people

in family decision making and household chores may also lead to accelerated self sufficiency in children (Weiss, 1978). But too much independence and responsibility can also make youngsters feel overwhelmed, incompetent and resentful. This independence and the mother's preoccupation with her own sex life can lead to precocious sexual concerns in some school age children and youth. When children are exposed to the sexual activities of parents, are asked to be informers and are quizzed about their own behavior and relationships with the other parent, children and especially daughters may develop a sexual sophistication which alienates them from their peer group and attracts them to older partners.

There is less known about relations with divorced fathers, and as reported again by Hetherington (1979) much of what follows comes from her own work, and that of Wallerstein and Kelly. There is little continuity between the pre and post separation parent-child relationship especially for fathers. Some intensely attached fathers find occasional contacts painful and withdraw from their children, whereas others seeeimprovement and may become competent and concerned when made the custodial parent.

The parenting practices of fathers also deteriorates in much the same fashion as for mothers in the year following divorce and improves greatly in the second year. Fathers are especially sensitive about losing the love of their child after divorce, and begin by being indulgent and permissive but gradually become more restrictive and punitive. They also become less available particularly to their daughters.

Most children want to keep up contact with their fathers, and unless he is poorly adjusted or immature or involved in conflict which intrudes on the child, frequent contact is associated with positive adjustment and social relations especially among boys. This also provides support to the divorced mother in her parenting role. However, as Hetherington notes, attempts to prevent the non-custodial parent from seeing the child may diminish the child's well-being.

The few recent studies on father-headed one-parent families cited by Hetherington (1979) are instructive. They have similar concerns to those of mothers in one-parent families: homemaking, scheduling, supervision and protection of the child, etc. They see the relationship with the child as good, and expect more independence and help with household tasks from them. The problems and needs of daughters are a special concern, especially sex education and relationships with adolescent daughters. One recent study found that girls in father-custody families were less well adjusted than those living with their mothers. For boys the pattern was reversed.

Resources of Parents

It is plausible that detrimental effects of separation and divorce may be due in part to reduced income of the custodial parent after the break. In fact a recent study suggests that low income has a greater effect on child rearing practices than father absence among divorced mothers (Colletta, 1979).

After the separation, the drop in income can be precipitous. In a 1970's national longitudinal study of families, when women were separated or divorced and retained custody of the child, their income to needs ratio fell by 35 percent (Hill and Hoffman, 1977). Part of the problem is the frequent lack of reliable support payments. When fathers retain custody, the financial problem is much less severe. It is also well established that divorce is more common among families with low and unstable incomes (see Bane, 1979; Hetherington, 1979). Whether effects are caused by low income or a drop in income remains to be determined.

Even when attempts are made to match SES, the father's occupational status or the combined earnings of the parents may not reflect well the conditions of the home where the child lives. The income of the household and financial stresses experienced there would be better indicators.

Low income is associated with stresses which make household and child care more difficult such as poor quality of housing and neighborhoods, the need for the mother to work, child care and moving (Colletta, 1978; Hodges, Wechsler and Ballantine, 1978). Many divorced women lack the education and job skills to obtain good paying jobs and quality child care. The social isolation following divorce may be intensified for children by moving and the loss of friends, neighbors and familiar schools. The new home is more likely to be in an area with higher risks to personal safety, fewer recreational facilities and less adequate schools (Hetherington, 1979).

There is little research on the effects of maternal employment in one parent families. What evidence there is suggests:

> "that if the divorced mother wishes to work and if adequate provisions are made for child care and maintenance of household routines, maternal employment may have no adverse effects on children and positive effects on the mother such as increased self-esteem, less social isolation and greater financial resources. However, it has been found that if the mother begins to work at the time of divorce or shortly thereafter the preschool child seems to experience the double loss of both parents which is reflected in a higher rate of behavior disorders (Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1978). In addition, maternal employment may add to the tasks ordinarily performed by two parents in the nuclear family"(Hetherington, 1979, pp. 19-20).

This kind of situation may lead to maternal deprivation as well as deprivation of the already-departed father. Children may receive less adult attention, have irregular meal and bed times, and be late to school (Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1978). How to devise appropriate household tasks for children to share the burden among working single parents without overburdening them is a challenge.

Social Supports

Friends, neighbors, relatives, organizations andiinstitutions may provide supports for parents and children experiencing divorce. Again we will draw on Hetherington's (1979) review. A number of studies indicate that support from family and friends promote positive attitudes toward self and one's circumstances, and enhance the parenting role among women. Women rely on

relatives for financial aid and help withchild care more after divorce, and increase contacts with their own kin. Such contact is beneficial for the mothers and their children, and the mental health of children in the home with a mother and grandmother is superior to that when living with the mother alone.

Friends and neighbors also help single parents in emergencies, with child care, transportation, shopping and finances. Families and community services provide more support for low income than middle income families. But low income divorced mothers are less satisfied with support from the father, living arrangements, employment and finances, especially when they had sons (Colletta, 1978). Black families have strong ties to the extended family system and surrogate kin which provide support to parents and children in all kinds of families (Stack, 1974).

While contact with the non-custodial parent and grandparents appear beneficial to the child, other supports among peers, school, the neighborhood, church and other groups have received little attention. Where relations with teachers, peers and neighbors are positive, they help lessen the impact of family stress (see Hetherington, 1979).

School Experiences

Difficulties in school performance - grades, attendance, behavior and work habits - among children from one parent families have been discussed earlier. The contrast with much less or nonexistent differences in standardized tests of ability and aptitude noted by Hetherington, Featherman and Camara (1981) poses an interesting problem. Are there features of the school environment or the child's psychology and behavior in the classroom which contribute to this discrepancy between ability and performance.

Multiple demands and stresses on divorced mothers, we have seen, may prevent their family life from having the regularity which helps children to come to school well prepared and on time. The stress of divorce itself

seems most critical in the first year. In the Hetherington, Cox and Cox study (1979)during this period children responded best to a relatively structured and predictable school environment. Positive adjustment also depended on qualities of the teacher - attentiveness, warmth, supportiveness and assignment of responsibilities. Such as environment may be more important to young children who cannot structure their own environments as older children can, and those experiencing more stress at home.

A recent study by Santrock and Tracy (1978) cautions that the difficulties of children from one parent families may be partly in the eye of the beholder. Two groups of teachers viewed a videotape showing social interaction of an eight year old boy. One group was told the boy's parents were divorced; the other group that he lived with both natural parents. Teachers rated the divorced child more negatively on happiness, emotional adjustment, and coping with stress. In another study, teachers were observed to direct more negative behavior toward children of divorce in the first year following the divorce, but by the second year there were no differences (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1979).

From the parent's viewpoint, a number of complaints can be heard. Clay (1980) solicited information from over 1200 single parents across the country regarding their own experience with their children's schools. Over one-third of the parents had heard school personnel make specific negative comments about one-parent families, and almost half had heard them mention "broken homes" or other stereotypes. Over half said they had to take time off work for conferences with teachers, and few schools provided care for younger children during school activities. Less than ten percent reported that non-custodial parents received report cards or notices of school activities, although one-third noted that non-custodial parents may attend parent-teacher conferences.

School systems are beginning to recognize the need and develop training to prepare teachers to work more effectively with children experiencing separation and divorce, and those living in one parent families. Yet stereotypic talk of "broken" homes still abounds, and such thinking is related to the teacher reactions to the videotapes. Training programs will have to present an accurate picture of when children from one parent families are likely to be unhappy or poorly adjusted, and conditions in their lives with parents and support systems which can create better functioning among these children.

These ideas are combined in a study of 3rd to 6th graders by Hammond (1979) who exploredself concept, achievement, school behavior and attitudes between children from two parent and one parent separated and divorced families. Teachers indicated no significant differences in reading or math achievement between the groups. They did rate the boys of divorced families higher on school behavior problems of "acting out" and "distractability" but no differences were found for girls. There was no difference in self concept between children of divorced and intact families. Boys from divorced families rated their families as less happy, but again for girls there was no difference. Hammond suggests that school counselors could use group counseling for children of divorce to share concerns and support, and could meet with parents who are divorced to discuss their children's needs.

Needed Research

Herzog and Sudia (1973) a decade ago cautioned against the conventional wisdom that the absence of a father has detrimental effects on children. in a blanket fashion. Since then some areas of difficulty have been identified, and the characteristics of children, their families and broader environments have been much more carefully and fully investigated.

Much of the research literature on divorce has focused on investigating anticipated problems behavior among children. This assumption of deficits is gradually being replaced by inquiries into a deliberately broad range of

parent-child interactions and child outcomes. Some are even paying special attention to the potential strengths and benefits of life in one parent families, and have found that more responsible behavior by children, more authority to women over their family life and and improved self concepts can be documented (Kohen, Brown and Feldberg, 1979; Weiss, 1975). More research is needed which examines areas of potential strengths and views family life from the standpoint of the family and child rearing goals parents set and their actions in pursuit of these goals. Regarding family life this means more attention to father custody families, and the effects of visiting patterns.

The intriguing differences in the way boys and girls react to divorce deserve further study also. both in the immediate period after divorce and in the longer term. A key may lie in the nature of mother-child relations, and sex role identification problems have been suggested as a possible explanation for the behavior of both boys and girls (see Shinn, 1978).

These sex differances also point to the reciprocal process of family life because the studies of Hetherington (1979) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) show that parents react to boys differently from girls. This area deserves more explicit treatment; longitudinal studies are particularly well suited to capture such processes.

In the community, we need to know more about supports and strains in the relationships of children of separated or divorced parents with their peers and with their teachers and other school personnel. How differentiated and accurate are teachers' perceptions of such children, how often are school environments supportive and in what ways, and how useful is teacher training? When many peers have also experienced enduring separation from a parent, do they and adults nearby become more tolerant and accepting and helpful to one parent families?

The role of religious organizations also should be explored. Some churches take a very strict and punitive stand against those who have been

divorced, while other churches promote social events for the formerly married. In her excellent introduction to a journal issue on children of divorce, Levitin (1979) lays out a number of other questions indicating that our understanding of the effects of divorce will only be deepened when characteristics of the child (age, sex, personality traits, concepts of family life, etc.) and characteristics of the family itself before and after separation (demography, extent of conflict, coping strategies, custodial arrangements, etc.) ar e specified and become the object of study or at least dimensions in the analysis.

Finally, there is need for more longitudinal studies which begin near the point of separation rather than divorce and follow families for some time. In this way the processes within the parent-child relationships can be given closer attention and shifts be more closely linked to child outcomes in the near and longer term. Small carefully delimited and matched samples of children from separated and intact families can be quite useful here and do not require the large expense of surveys.

The studies of the 1970's have opened the door on many intriguing aspects of the effects of divorce on children. Hopefully the 1980's will see these lines of research expanded to gain fuller knowledge of this complex phenomenon.

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